

## [Social Life in and about Superior]

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Superior, Montana

TOPIC: Social Life in and about Superior

Interview with Mrs. Irene Bundrick, Route 1, Box 157 D, Stockton, California, (Mrs. Bundrick requested that her name be withheld in case her contribution is used.)

My family came to Superior from Missoula in 1898, when I was about 14. My father had been editor of several of the larger Montana papers, among them the Butte Miner. Our former environment had been so different from the one we found here that the mining atmosphere made quite an impression on my brothers and sisters and me, at first mainly of shock. We didn't miss much about the many colorful characters.

One I remember clearly, Murray, "the Roller;" I don't know that I ever heard his exact name. He had long hair which he usually twisted into a knot covered by his hat. He was well-educated, and when sober was much in demand among the miners as a latter-writer. He lived in a long log cabin, just south and west of the bridge crossing the Missoula River, a few feet north of where the Strand Theatre now stands. A professional bum, sleeping with the pigs in his drunkenness, he could juggle the Kings' English.

And we couldn't shut our eyes to Minnie, the prostitute; the flaming red mother Hubbard she affected was too [?] easily recognized at a distance. Like the others of her profession here at that time, she was not very young; cross-eyes marred her appearance. She had a child whom she kept in a school, ignorant of the mother's means of livelihood.

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Then there was "Mom" Bowers. And Stella, who ran a saloon. Stell was quite a business woman.

In those days, dances were the main source of entertainment, and we would ride many miles to attend one. I usually went with Mrs. Otto Riefflin; she was Laura McDowell then, a girl about my age. I rode to Carter (Keystone) with Hughie Gillis, of whom I remember nothing except that he was a Scotchman with a moustache. At Carter, "Aunt Kate" McDowell, Laura's mother got in front, and Laura and I and two other girls piled in back. We rode over the Deep Creek hill, not having judgement enough to spare the horses by walking occasionally. Gillis dropped us at the Thomas Hotel (now the [Ordean?]), where we had an elaborate meal; I remember the dessert was a corn strach pudding, topped with some sort of jelly. From Superior, we took the stage to Pardee.

We danced square, dances, the minuet, and the two-step, which was new at that time. Old Dan Moore took Laura and me to supper, while another old prospector escorted the other two.

The supper was like a Thanksgiving banquet: turkey with all the trimmings, topped by colored cakes placed at intervals along the tables. Tall goblets and gay pink napkins folded in peaks added to the color.

Adolphe Lozeau was the fiddler; he played all night for the dancing. During the supper hour, a quartette entertained up. They sang "In the Good Old Summer-time;" a song beginning: "The rain and the hail pattered down on the window pane;" and another beginning: "There was once a maiden of winsome grace, With laughing blue eyes and a winsome face."

On pay days, Pardee boomed. The grocery store was in the same room with a saloon, at the back of the building. I was sometimes sent for groceries, and often saw stacks of gold a foot high on the counter. Money clinked in poker games, the miners too busy with

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their gambling to notice me. Buckskin pokes were used to carry nuggets of different sizes, and ounce or two-ounce bottles for gold dust brought out from Cedar Creek. I remember seeing Bill Bonnett, Al Wade, and Tom Mulroney turning these over to the grocer to weigh.

Tom Mulroney was a bearded miner with a twisted face. His fellows dubbed him "Crooked-face" Mulroney. These early settlers were not subtle about their choice of nicknames, nor were the bearers of such names sensitive about them.

The miners were very liberal in donations to any cause, and generous to children. The quarter was the lowest change they noticed. Often they [?] pocketfuls of money into the air for the boys to scramble for.

Most of them showed little respect for expressions of religion. At one time a company of Salvation Army workers [came?] top Superior from Missoula, with cornet and [accordion?], to hold services in the [Redman?] Hall. They bumped their heads to pray hard for the sinners. The natives laughed and lahed laughed at the spectacle. Following the services, and after the Salvation Army members bad departed, the miners had a dance. (Every occasion in those days so ended.)

At another time a traveling minister came to pray in the street of Superior. The miners endured it for a few minutes, then routed him by a stream of water from a hose.

Sunday School was held in the waiting room of the Northern Pacific Depot in Iron Mountain. Vern Wilkinson played the cornet to accompany the singing.